

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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That health of body depends in a high ^{ooo} degree upon tranquillity of mind is incontestible: the functions of the brain are disturbed, the stomach grows languid, the strength fails for want of food, and, the better juices are destroyed, when the mind is oppressed by turbulent affections, by anxiety, love, fear, anger, or sadness. The body will be sane if inhabited by a sane mind. This being the case, we cannot wonder that the Abipones are possessed of great vigour and longevity. Their minds are generally in a tranquil state. 181 They live reckless of the past, little curious about the present, and very seldom anxious for the future. They fear danger, but either from not perceiving or from despising the weightiness of it, always think themselves able to subdue or avoid it. When a numerous foe [726] is announced to be at hand they either provide for their safety by a timely flight, or await the assault, and amidst jocund songs quaff [273] mead, their elixir, which inspires them with courage, and banishes fear. Gnawing cares about the augmentation of their property, or concerning food and raiment, have no place amongst them. They make no mortal of such account as to die, or run mad, for hate or love of him. No affections with them are either violent or of long duration. This tranquillity ^{ooo}

756 grandfather, thus acquiring the reputation of prophets. Whatever they learn either from conjecture, from secret intelligence, or from their own examination, they predict to be about to happen with infinite pomposity, and are always listened to with as much attention as if they were actually inspired. Should their prophecies not be approved by the event, they are never at a loss for excuses to shelter their authority. Sometimes, in the dead of the night, they suddenly announce the enemy's approach with a whistle or a pipe. All are awakened, and without once calling in question the truth of the juggler's prediction, fly to arms. The women and children betake themselves to a place of safety, and whilst they pass hours, nay whole nights, in the fear of death, and their husbands in threatening it to the assailants, not one of the enemy makes his appearance. But that the faith in their prophecies, and the authority of the prophets, may suffer no diminution, they declare, with a smile, that the hostile assault has been averted by their grandfather the devil. At other times a body of enemies often rushes upon them on a sudden, when not one of these prophets has either foreseen or foretold the danger of an attack. A ridiculous event, à propos to this subject, occurs to my recollection. About

756 his funeral obsequies. If they ride out any
756 where to hunt or fight, they are always accom-
726 panied on their journey by one of these knaves,
[124] on whose words and advice they fully depend,
believing that he knows and can foretel what-
ever may conduce to the success of the expedi-
tion; he teaches them the place, time, and man-
ner proper for attacking wild beasts or the
[789] enemy. On an approaching combat, he rides
round the ranks, striking the air with a palm
bough, and with a fierce countenance, threaten-
ing eyes, and affected gesticulations, imprecates
evil on their enemies. This ceremony they
think of much avail to securing them a victory.
The best part of the spoils are adjudged to him
756 as the fruits of his office. I observed that these
crafty knaves have plenty of excellent horses,
and domestic furniture superior to that of the
rest. Whatever they wish for they extort from
this credulous people. The Abipones account
it a crime to contradict their words, or oppose
their desires or commands, fearing their ven-
681 geance. When any of the jugglers are ill
756 disposed towards a man, they call him to their
house, and are instantly obeyed. When he is
come, they harshly reproach him for some ima-
ginary fault or injury, and declare their inten-
tion of punishing him in the name of their
grandfather. They order him instantly to bare

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622 refuse to follow him, for what Caesar said
701 of the German chiefs is applicable to the Abi-
ponian cacique: *Authoritate suadendi magis, quam*
622 *jubendi potestate audiatur*. As soon as a report

726 is spread of the danger of an hostile attack, the
business of the cacique is to provide for the se-
curity of his people; to increase the store of
weapons; to order the horses to be fetched
from the distant pastures to safer places; to
send out watchers by night, and scouts in every
direction, to procure supplies from the neigh-
bours, and to gain their alliance. When the
enemy is to be attacked, he rides before his
men, and occupies the front of the army he has
raised, less solicitous about the numbers of the
enemy, than the firmness of his troops: for as
with birds, when one is shot, the rest fly away,
in like manner the Abipones, alarmed at the
deaths or wounds of a few of their fellow-
soldiers, desert their leader, and escape on swift
horses, wherever room for flight is afforded
them, more anxious about their own safety than
about obtaining a victory. Yet it must be ac-
knowledged that this nation never wants its
[703] heroes. Many remain intrepid whilst their
companions fall around them, and though pierced
with wounds and streaming with blood, retain
even in death the station where they fought.
Desire of glory, ferocious study of revenge, or

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despair of escape, inspires the naturally fearful
with courage, which a Lacedemonian would
admire, and which Europe desires to see in
her warriors.

Moreover, being lovers of liberty and roving,
they choose to own no law, and bind themselves
to their cacique by no oaths of fidelity. With-
out leave asked on their part, or displeasure
evinced on his, they remove with their families
whithersoever it suits them, and join some other
cacique; and when tired of the second, return
with impunity to the horde of the first. This is
quite common, and a matter of surprize to no
one that knows how fleeting is the faith, how
mutable the will of the Indians. Should a re-
port be spread by uncertain or suspicious au-
thors, that the enemy are coming in a few days,
it is enough. Numbers, dreading the loss of life
more than of fame, will desert their cacique, and
hasten with their families to some well-known
retreats. Lest however they should be branded
with the name of deserters and cowards, they
say they are going out to hunt. Hence, when-
ever we priests had to defend the new colonies
filled with savage assailants, and almost desti-
tute of inhabitants to repel them, we generally
made more use of craft and threats than of force.
The danger, or the fear of it, being dissipated,
these fugacious heroes at length came home, no

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291 respectable appearance. When they are hew-
 [313] ing down a tree, and are afraid of being fatigued,
 they will sometimes throw off their clothes, if
 they be out of sight. Some strip themselves
 [726] quite naked when they are going to join battle
 [703] with the savages, partly that, being lighter, they
 may be so much the more expeditious in avoid-
 ing their adversaries' weapons, partly, that they
 may appear to despise wounds. In long jour-
 [404] nies, they generally go bareheaded amidst rain,
 heat, and wind. Some, however, tie a piece of
 red woollen cloth round their forehead, which
 is a great defence against the heat of the sun
 [177] and pains in the head. They greatly prize a
 European hat, especially the young men, who
 likewise are much delighted with Spanish
 saddles, with spurs, and iron bridles. The wo-
 men wear the same dress as the men, adjusted
 in rather a different manner.

462 The clothing of the Abipones is the chief em-
 286 ployment of the women, who are commendable
 for their assiduity, and almost avidity in labour:
 for not to mention the daily business of the
 house, they shear sheep, spin the wool very
 [386] neatly, dye it beautifully, by the aid of alum,
 with any colours they may have at hand, and
 afterwards weave it into cloth, adorned with a
 great number of lines and figures, and with a
 variety of colours. You would take it for a

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unknown to the Abipones, and quite unnecessary to them. Boys and girls not unfrequently pilfered melons grown in our gardens, and chickens reared in our houses. but in them the theft was excusable; for they falsely imagined that these things were free to all, or might be taken not much against the will of the owner. Though I have enlarged on the native virtues of the Abipones more than it was my intention to do, I shall think nothing has been said till I have made a few observations relative to their endurance of labour. Who can describe the constant fatigues of war and hunting which they undergo? When they make an excursion against the enemy, they often spend two or three months in an arduous journey of above three hundred leagues through desert wilds. They swim across vast rivers, and long lakes more dangerous than rivers. They traverse plains of great extent, destitute both of wood and water. They sit for whole days on saddles scarce softer than wood, without having their feet supported by a stirrup. Their hands always bear the weight of a very long spear. They generally ride trotting horses, which miserably shake the rider's bones by their jerking pace. They go bare-headed amidst burning sun, profuse rain, clouds

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147 of dust, and hurricanes of wind. They generally
484 rally cover their bodies with woollen garments,
• 226 which fit close to the skin; but if the extreme
heat obliges them to throw these off as far as
the middle, their breasts, shoulders, and arms
are cruelly bitten and covered with blood by
swarms of flies, gad-flies, gnats, and wasps.
[224] As they always set out upon their journeys
unfurnished with provisions, they are obliged
to be constantly on the look out for wild animals,
which they may pursue, kill, and convert
[415] into a remedy for their hunger. As they have
no cups they pass the night by the side of
rivers or lakes, out of which they drink like
dogs. But this opportunity of getting water
is dearly purchased; for moist places are not
only seminaries of gnats and serpents, but likewise
the haunts of dangerous wild beasts,
which threaten them with sleepless nights and
[513] peril of their lives. They sleep upon the hard
ground, either starved with cold, or parched
with heat, and if overtaken by a storm, often lie
awake, soaking in water the whole night.
When they perform the office of scouts, they
frequently have to creep on their hands and
feet over trackless woods, and through forests,
to avoid discovery; passing days and nights
without sleep or food. This also was the case
when they were long pursued by the enemy,
And forced to hasten their flight.

181 plated, and then it is with a hand trembling
1721 at every noise. They seldom attack openly,
[722] but do it in general unawares. They dare
little against the bold who front assailants,
and are accustomed to keep strict watch.
They never fear less than when they perceive
181 themselves the objects of fear. Craft,
1726 and the swiftness of their horses, more than
strength, were what gave them the power to
commit so many slaughters. Though you
[727] may object to their cowardice, yet that method
of warfare is surely admirable, and agreeable
to military tactics, which enabled them, with
no loss, or a very trifling one of their own
soldiers, to return home victorious, laden with
the heads of the Spaniards, and triumphantly
displaying crowds of captives, cattle, and other
spoils taken from the enemy. *Hæc ars, says*
Vegetius, dimicaturis est necessaria, per quam
vitam retineant, et victoriam consequantur. For
this purpose, heroes themselves have used a
sword, and a shield, with the one to offend the
enemy, with the other to defend themselves.
Cunning, agility, and the swiftness of their
horses, were a shield, nay, better than any
shield, to the Abipones. If they see one or
two of their fellow-soldiers fall, they immediately fly. When straitened, and deprived of
all means of escape, fear is converted into rage,

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and they fight with the utmost obstinacy. I ¹⁸¹
shall now proceed to treat of their arms, scouts, ⁷²⁶
councils of war, military provisions, hostile ex-
peditions, various modes of fighting, customs
on obtaining a victory, and lastly, of the slaugh-
ters committed by them in every part of the
province.

752 part of his head, and breaking in being ex-
151 tracted, remained fixed there as firm as a nail.

At our advice he visited Sta. Fè, to obtain the
[777] aid of a surgeon, who found it necessary to
make an incision before he could lay hold of the
bony arrow point with his forceps. The opera-
tion was successfully performed, but not with-
out severe pain, which the Indian bore with the
utmost fortitude, not allowing a single expres-
sion of pain to escape him; he even exhorted
the surgeon, who, unwilling to inflict so much
torture, was hesitating in his task, to proceed;
"Do you see me shrink?" said he: "fear nothing,
I beseech you; cut, pierce, do what ever you
like with confidence. I have long been accus-
tomed to pain, wounded as I have so often been
with different weapons." At length when the
bony point was extracted, such a quantity of
blood gushed out, you would have thought an
artery had been opened. The Indian beheld
this with a calm countenance, and thanked his
deliverer in the best terms he was master of.

411 Before entering a battle, they lay aside their
726 finest arrows to be employed on the blow which
they think of most importance, generally
having one of tried virtue in readiness to de-
fend themselves in urgent peril, or to slay some
224 one whose death they particularly desire. When
411 they wish not to kill, but to take alive, birds

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WHEN THEY WISH NOT TO KILL, BUT TO TAKE ALIVE, BIRDS
 and other small animals, they use arrows furnished with a little ball of wood or wax, instead of a point: with this they stun and knock down the animal, but do not kill it. Whenever they are unable to direct the weapon straight to the mark, on account of some intervening obstacle, they shoot it archwise, giving it a curved direction, in the same manner as in besieging camps, balls of fire are cast from mortars. The Abipones stand in no need of these to set fire to houses; for they fasten burning cotton or tow to the ends of their arrows, and casting them against roofs of wood or straw, set fire to whatever they like, from ever so great a distance. Many towns of the Spaniards were reduced to ashes by this fatal artifice. In the town of the Rosary, I had the thatch of my house plastered over with thick mud to protect it from the flames cast by the arrows of the neighbouring savages. With the same view, I covered a wooden observatory, constructed for the purpose of watching the motions of the savages, with hides; nor did the contrivance disappoint my hopes.

The spear and the bow, though the chief arms of the Abipones, are not the only ones. They have a weapon composed of three stone balls, covered with leather, and fastened together by as many thongs meeting in one: this

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[i.e. a bolas --- ANALYST]

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thorns imbued with a poisonous juice into a wooden tube, and blowing hard into it, aim them against wild beasts, and their enemies, by which means they slay them with impunity. P
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The Abipones are unacquainted with shields and targets, but they cover greatest part of their bodies with a sort of defence, made of an undressed anta's hide, a tiger's skin being sewed either in the in or outside; it is open in the middle, that the head may come through, and extended on each side as far as the elbows and middle; it is impenetrable to common arrows, but not to spears and bullets, though it somewhat diminishes their force. To this coat of mail they added a girth wider than a man's hand, of the dressed hide of the same animal, when they saw their leader Debayakaikin wounded in the belly with a spear. They make use of this armour when they have to fight with the other Indians. Most of them, however, expose their bodies entirely naked to the weapons of their enemies, and seem the more secure, as they are more expeditious in avoiding the fatal blow. For the weight and hardness of such armour prevents that agility, which, in their method of fighting, is of such importance to their safety, as much as its thickness protects the body. When they engage with the Spaniards they neglect their bow and wooden A
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[713] breastplates, which would be of little service
[726] against leaden bullets. In a strong appear, a
swift horse, and a crafty ambuscade, they then
place all their hopes of victory, and seldom
engage on foot, unless absolutely obliged.
They had rather combat the enemy from a dis-
tance, than close at hand, when they fear for
their lives. They oftener kill piecemeal than
[772] with downright blows. Though the major part
[439] have either purchased swords from the Spa-
niards, or taken them in war, they seldom make
use of them in skirmishing.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

OF THE SCOUTS, AND WAR COUNCILS OF THE ABIPONES.

THEIR method of warfare varies according to the adversaries they have to deal with. They adopt one mode of fighting against the Spaniards, another against savages like themselves. This, however, may be observed in general, that they are never precipitate in taking up arms against any one, nor ever hazard an attack unless confident of victory; though, like European generals, they are often deceived. Where they had looked for laurels, they reap deadly cypresses—they go out to seek wool, and return home shorn themselves. The fortune of war is always uncertain. After having determined upon a hostile expedition, they usually send out scouts to discover which way they are to go, and at what place begin the attack; to learn every particular respecting the number of their neighbours who might send supplies to their adversaries, and concerning the access to houses; carefully to examine the situation most convenient for an ambuscade, the places by which they might approach undiscovered, and whither, if need required, they might betake themselves

• 726 for safety, together with the pastures of cattle, the number of guards, and other particulars of that kind. And so cunningly do these emissaries discharge their office, that they contrive to see all things, and be seen by none.

Leaving their horses for a while, either on the inaccessible bank of a river, or in the recesses of the woods, that they may not be betrayed by their means, they crawl along on their hands and feet, and lurking amongst boughs and bushes observe all things, both at a distance and close at hand. Concealed by the shades of night, they sometimes approach the very houses of the Spaniards, and listening, catch part of the conversation of the persons within; those even that are ignorant of the Spanish tongue, can at least discover, from the tone of the voices, whether the house contain more men or women. That their footsteps may not betray them, they fasten pieces of skin to their feet, by which artifice the marks of human tread are either disguised or destroyed. To obtain a view of distant objects, they frequently climb trees, or stand upright on their horses' backs. They generally send out two or three of these scouts, who separate at night, one taking one road, one another, first fixing upon a time and place to meet together again. That they may be able with the more certainty to

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THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE WITH THE MORE
CERTAINTY TO

keep their appointment; they imitate the voice of some bird or beast, as agreed upon beforehand, from which one may know and discover the other. But this artifice must be warily adopted; for if at night-time they imitate the note of a bird which is only heard by day, the Spaniards know it to be uttered by the scouts of the savages, and by timely cautions elude the hostile attack. Often one companion signifies to another that he has arrived beforehand by broken boughs of trees, or high grass knotted in various ways. None perform the office of spy with more success than those Abipones who in their childhood have been taken in war, and bred up by the Spaniards, and who have returned to their countrymen when grown up; for, besides that they are actuated by a stronger hatred to the Spaniards, and a keener thirst for vengeance, from their acquaintance with places, and with the Spanish tongue, they dwell for a time with impunity in the Spanish towns, and as they use the same dress and language, are universally taken for Spaniards. Secure by this artifice, even in mid-day, and in the public marketplace, they survey every thing, and enquire about whatever it is their interest to know; learn what military men are absent, or preparing for departure; what waggons are laden with

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648 merchandise, and whither they are bound, so
726 that they are afterwards easily plundered by
the savages in those immense deserts; not one
of the waggoners or guards being able to pre-
vent the slaughter, as men of this description
are in general but ill provided with arms, and
still worse with courage.

273 The scouts, after having finished their jour-
726 ney and made an accurate report to their
employers of all they have seen and heard, a
council of war, and at the same time a drink-
ing-party is appointed; for the Abipones think
themselves ill fitted for deliberation with dry-
lips. The Cacique, the promoter of the expe-
dition, in the course of the drinking, delivers
his opinion on the affair, and enquires that of
the rest. He animates his companions to carry
on the thing with vigour, either by the ex-
ample of their ancestors, or by the hope of
glory or booty. Repeated draughts inflame
both the bodies and minds of the drinkers: for
the meed which they make of honey, or the
alfaroba, immediately disorders the brain, like
the strongest wine, an effect which is power-
fully increased by the shouts of the intoxicated,
by singing, and the noise of drums and gourds.
The heroic deeds of their ancestors, and former
victories, are generally the subjects of these
savage songs. The spectacle is as ridiculous

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as it is possible to conceive. In every one of the Abipones, you would behold a thunder-bolt of war. Each thinks himself a Hector, an Epaminondas, a Hannibal; and such they might be believed by all who beheld their faces covered with blood-red stains to render them more terrific, their arms and breasts full of scars, and their threatening eyes, and who listened to their ferocious and slaughter-breathing words. But could we look into their breasts, we should perceive that they were different within from what they appeared without. We should discover a shell without a kernel, an ass in a lion's skin, an ignis fatuus under thundering words, and vain rage unsupported by strength. Though, no longer masters of themselves, they crawl on the ground in a state of intoxication, at your bidding they will climb to Heaven itself, they will tear away the hinges of the globe, and had all the human race but one neck, like Caligula, they would end it at a blow. Were they as courageous in battle, as vaunting in their cups, they would long since have extinguished the race of Spaniards in Paraguay. But as some one has observed, drunken bullies are better trumpeters than soldiers. They are all empty sound. Amidst their cups and their songs they are bold as lions, but in battle more cowardly than hares.

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF THE HOSTILE EXPEDITIONS, PROVISIONS, AND CAMPS
OF THE ABIPONES.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the military ⁷²⁶ ● expeditions which they conclude upon when intoxicated, they faithfully execute, at the appointed time, when sober. Not only are they ⁷²⁶ destitute of almanacs, they even have no names ⁸⁰⁵ for the days and months. They know, however, without the danger of mistake, on what day the moon will begin, when it will be at full, and when it will be on the wane. They use these changes of the moon as a measure of time to determine expeditions, so that though distant many days' journey the parties assemble at the appointed day, and even meet at the very precise hour that had been agreed upon. For ^[201] though they have no names for the hours, and no machine to point them out, they supply these deficiencies by their fingers, with which they point to that part of the sky which the sun or moon or some nightly star will occupy at the period of meeting. When the moon is on ⁷²⁶ the wane, they generally judge it a fit time for a journey, that they may set out under the cover

726 of darkness, and incur less risk of detection: on their return, if they are obliged to make it in haste, they wish that luminary to be on the increase. They generally begin a journey about mid-day, and in different companies, meeting together in the evening at some appointed place.

721 A European prince, when about to engage in a war, wants more than lead and iron: he stands in need of gold and silver wherewith to procure provisions, and pay his troops. The chieftain of the Abipones has no care of this kind: every one of his soldiers is furnished with plenty of horses, a formidable spear, a bow, and a bundle of arrows. These are their only instruments of war. The severed heads of the Spaniards, thousands of horses and mules taken from their estates, children torn from their mothers' bosoms, and the glory derived from these, serve both for the rewards and trophies of the fighting Abipones. 726 Though the colony which they purpose to attack be more than two hundred leagues distant, they each drive but two horses before them, and ride upon a third. They do not judge it expedient to begin a journey laden with provisions. They carry nothing either for meat or drink. Formerly they are said to have had roasted rabbits for provisions, but that was when they were less exercised in hunting, being unprovided with horses. Now the Abipones

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kill any animal they meet for food, with the spear they carry in their hands. That each may hunt more expeditiously, and obtain more booty, they separate their ranks, unless suspicious of the enemy's being close upon them, and disperse themselves over the plain, afterwards assembling to pass the night or mid-day together. For they know what situations afford the best opportunities of getting wood and water, and where they may safely lurk without fear of secret hostilities.

They think gourds and horns, which are used for flaggons and drinking-cups in Paraguay, a superfluous burden; for they can either take up water in the hollow of their hands, or stoop, and drink it like dogs. Pools and deep rivers are often at hand, but their salt and bitter waters are fitter to torture the stomach, than quench the thirst. They consider an iron knife, and a pebble to sharpen it, necessary instruments on a journey; as also two sticks, by the mutual attrition of which they can elicit fire even while sitting on horseback. Of these trifles consists the whole furniture of the Abipones, happy in being able to dispense with all that luggage and those waggons which in Europe are justly called the impediments of the army, and leeches of the treasury. Our Abipones pass the day and night in the open air, and are either parched

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- 726 with heat, or drenched with rain of many days' continuance. They expose their bare heads to the burning sun; they strip their shoulders, breasts, and arms of the garment of sheep's or otters' skins, and had rather endure the stings of gnats, than the perspiration caused by the fervid heat of the air. A turf is their bed at night, a saddle their pillow, and the sky their covering. Every one waits upon himself, nor does the leader employ any one else to prepare his food, or saddle his horse. If they have to cross wide rivers or vast lakes, they need neither [701] bridge nor boat. When it is no longer fordable they leap from their horses into the water, strip themselves, hold up their clothes at the end of their spear in the left hand, and using the right, with which they grasp the reins of their horse, for an oar, struggle to the opposite bank.

[481] In the commencement of a journey they daily send out scouts in all directions, who, if they discover any traces of a foreign nation or any mark of hostile designs, immediately announce it to their fellow-soldiers. They generally choose a situation to pass the night in, which, being guarded behind, and on both sides by a lake, river, or thick wood, renders access difficult; where they cannot be surrounded on a sudden; and where a few can repel or elude the attacks of a great many. They lie down in a semicir-

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ocular form. Each has his spear fixed at his head, and four or five keep up a fire burning in the midst, unless fear of the enemy obliges them to refrain from this comfort, lest the blaze or the smoke should betray them: though on some occasions, it was of use to multiply fires, in order to deceive the enemy; for from the number of them the number of men passing the night thereabout is usually argued. By this artifice Cortez is said to have imposed upon the Mexicans. Whilst some are indulging in sleep, others, appointed to keep watch, scour the plain on horseback, both for the purpose of bringing back the scattered horses, and, on the approach of danger of admonishing their sleepy comrades by sound of trumpet. I have been astonished to see with what activity and fidelity they performed all the offices of watchmen in our colonies. Whole nights have they spent in riding up and down the plains adjacent to the town, even in very boisterous weather, whenever the slightest rumours were spread of the approach of the enemy. By the nightly sound of horns and trumpets they signified that they were on the alert, and, by showing the enemy that their intentions were discovered, prevented them from making the attack: for it is usual with the savages never to attempt any thing except against the unprepared. During the whole

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726 seven years that I spent amongst the Abi-
484 pones, I regularly found that whenever we
passed sleepless nights in arms, for fear of an
enemy, not so much as the shadow of one ever
approached; and that when none of us suspected
any thing hostile, a formidable swarm of savages
fell upon our colony. An enemy is never more
to be dreaded than when he is feared the
least.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE ASSAULT, AND THE MEASURES PRECEDING IT.

HIGHLY to be admired are the anxious precautions with which they precede an attack. They minutely premeditate whatever is likely to befall them. That they may not be deceived in their opinions, they make one of their jugglers the ruler of the expedition, whom, adorned with the knowledge of things future and absent, they consult on all occasions, and, madly credulous, revere as the Delphic Apollo. Should the event prove contrary to the juggler's predictions; not one of them will blame or even distrust him. Though he were to commit blunders every day, he would still carry home a considerable portion of the spoils, the reward of his mendacity. If an attack is to be made next day, they contemplate the situation of affairs in every point of view, nor ever apply their minds to the execution of a project, till convinced of its being devoid of danger. They leave the drove of superfluous horses with persons to guard them, in a place out of sight. They stain their faces with various colours, to excite ter-

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THEY STAIN THEIR FACES WITH VARIOUS COLORS, TO
EXCITE TERROR -

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ror, and for the same purpose some wear a crown of parrots' feathers, others a red cap sparkling with beads of glass, or snails' shells, and others again place an enormous vulture's wing on their heads. I knew an Abipon who wore the skin of a stag's head, branching with horns, by way of a helmet, whenever he was going to fight, and another who tied the beak of a tuncà to his nose before he entered into an engagement. I always observed that those persons who were most solicitous about rendering their persons terrible to others, had the least courage themselves. The most intrepid, neglecting these precautions, await the weapons of the enemy quite undefended, though they always paint their faces. All sit half naked on the bare back of the best horse they possess, and, in place of a bridle, use a thong fastened to the animal's jaws. They throw away all heavy things, and whatever may retard the speed of the horse, that they may be able to make or avoid an attack with more celerity.

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The most favourable time for an assault, in their apprehension, is either the beginning or end of the day, when there is just light sufficient to enable them to distinguish all objects. For at dawn or twilight they find more men at home to slay, and those oppressed with sleep: whereas in the day they are generally absent on busi-

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ness. But as the morning or evening have generally been chosen for committing slaughters, the Spaniards began to account those times dangerous, and by vigilant care to defeat the machinations of the savages. Perceiving which, the Abipones thought proper to depart from their usual custom, and often fell upon us at noon, when we were suspecting nothing of the matter. The Mocobios and Tobas followed their example, so that, in the Abiponian colonies, we could reckon no part of the day secure from hostile designs. They scarcely ever venture to make an attack at night, however, for in dark places they fear that some person may be concealed to kill them. Entering my apartment to pay me a friendly visit, when it happened to be destitute of light, they were immediately alarmed, and fearfully exclaimed, *Kemcn nenegin greërigi!* How black your house is! But they are not afraid of the dark in the open plain, when they want to drive away horses, watch, explore the country, or do any thing else there. It is peculiar to the Guaycurûs to break into the colonies and commit their ravages by night; they secretly send forward some of their people to pluck up the stakes fixed in the ground for the security of the place, that the rest of the company may obtain access while the inhabitants are fast asleep, and dream-

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 726 ing of any thing but the impending slaughter.
 It is on this account that the Guaycurù nation
 has been so universally formidable. Moreover,
 A
 726 the Abipones do not always conduct their as-
 saults in the same manner. If a colony of
 Christians is to be attacked, they approach se-
 cretly by some unknown way, and without noise.
 They block up all the ways with many rows of
 horse, that no place of escape may be left to the
 inhabitants. Others on foot break open the
 doors of houses; but if they judge this perilous
 they set fire to the buildings from a distance by
 shooting arrows headed with burning cotton or
 tow against them, and if the roofs be covered
 with straw or any material of that kind, they
 immediately burn, and wrap the inhabitants in
 flames; thus, all who rush out are slain by the
 savages, and all who remain within are burnt to
 death; and it is as certain as it is incredible,
 that the weapons of the savages are more
 dreaded than the fire. In the town of Iago San-
 chez, near Corrientes, a church, with the priest
 officiating at the altar, some Indian women and
 children, and a few men, was burnt to ashes.
 727 At other times the Abipones, having slain or
 captivated all the inhabitants, carry off what-
 ever may be of service to them; they even take
 away many things, with the use of which they
 are unacquainted, that the Christians may de-

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rive no benefit from them, though they soon⁷²⁷
after break them to pieces, or throw them into
some river.

Whenever the Abipones think fit to attack⁷²⁶
the bands of the Spaniards, they rush upon them
on their horses, not in close ranks, like the Eu-
ropeans, but in various parties, so that they can
attack their adversaries at once in front, behind,
and on both sides, and extending their spears
above their horses' heads, kill all they meet.
They strike a blow, but that they may not re-
ceive one in turn, leap back as quick as they
came, and presently resuming courage, return
again and again into the ranks. Every one is
his own leader; every one follows his own im-
pulse. They can turn their horses round in^[727]
various circles, with the utmost swiftness, hav-
ing them wonderfully under their command.
They can suspend their bodies from the horse's
back, and twist them about like a tumbler, or,
to prevent themselves from being wounded,
conceal them entirely under the horse's belly.
It is by this art chiefly that they escape the
leaden bullets of the Spaniards; for by con-
tinually changing their position, they deceive
and weary the eye of him that is taking aim at
them with a gun. They condemn the stationary
fighting of the European soldier, and call it
madness in a man to stand and expose his

726 breast as a mark to the flying balls. They
boast that their quickness in assaulting and
evading the blow, is the most useful part of the
art of war. Whoever is aware of the volubility
703 of the savages, will never fire till quite sure of
726 hitting them; for after hearing a harmless re-
port, without seeing any of their comrades fall,
they will cast away their dread of European
arms, and grow more daring than ever; but as
long as they see you threatening them with a
gun, they will continue to fear, more anxious
to save themselves than to kill others.

The examples of our own age show that rash-
ness in firing has been the destruction of many,
—circumspect and provident delay the salvation
of no fewer. It may be as well to give a few in-
stances of this. In the territory of St. Iago del
Estero, about dawn a troop of Abiponian horse
descended from a steep and precipitous rock, and
attacked a town of the Spaniards, called Las Bar-
rancas; nor was it any difficult matter for them
to slay the sleeping inhabitants. The Captain,
Hilario, awakened by the yelling of the savages,
and the groans of the dying, occupied the thresh-
old of his house, keeping a gun always pointed at
the enemies. Not one of them dared approach
him. By this threatening action alone, he pre-
served himself and his little daughter alive
amidst the deaths of so many of his neighbours.

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Another Spaniard, in the territory of Corrientes, seeing the court-yard of his house, which was but slightly fortified with stakes, surrounded by Abipones, turned his gun, perhaps not loaded, towards them, threatening first one, then another, by turns. This was more than sufficient to frustrate the intended assault of the Abipones. I knew a captain named Gorosito, who did much service amongst the soldiers of St. Iago. He made use of a gun from which you could not expect a single spark of fire, and on being asked why he did not have it repaired, replied that he thought that unnecessary. "It is sufficient," said he, "to show even a useless gun to the savages, who, not knowing it to be defective, are terrified at the very sight of it. Furnished with this gun, I have gained not only security, but glory, in many skirmishes." But I have no occasion for the testimonies and experience of others, having myself so often frightened away troops of assaulting savages, armed with a gun which I never once fired.

On the other hand, how dangerous a thing it is to fire guns inconsiderately, we have often found on various occasions, but above all in a new Indian colony, where a few garrison soldiers guarded the borders of Tucuman, on account of the frequent incursions of the savages.

703 This little town, the rebellious Mataguayos at-
726 tacked about evening with all sorts of weapons.
The soldiers, seized with a sudden trepidation,
discharged all the fire-arms they could lay hands
on at the savage band, but to their own injury,
not that of the enemy, who, leaving their adver-
saries no time to load afresh, set fire to the houses
with arrows headed with burning tow, and
pierced the soldiers, who fled from thence into
the court-yard, with barbed darts. Two Jesuit
priests, who officiated there, Fathers Francisco
Ugalde and Romano Harto, whilst attending to
the salvation of the dying soldiers, underwent
the fury of the savages within the palisadoes of
the house. The first was mortally wounded
with arrows, and buried in the ruins of the
burning chapel, where he was entirely reduced
to ashes, one little bone alone remaining, to
which funeral honours were afterwards paid
elsewhere. That his soul was received into
Heaven is the opinion of all who are acquainted
with his exceeding piety and mild integrity
of conduct. Father Romano Harto, his com-
panion, though wounded with two arrows
which pierced deep into his side, crept under
cover of night from the palings of his house
into a neighbouring wood, and escaped the
eyes and murderous hands of the savages. Wel-

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tering in blood, and tortured by the pain of his wounds and the burning thirst it occasioned, he passed the night out of doors amongst the trees, during a furious tempest of rain, wind, and thunder. No one was at hand to lend him any aid. At day-break, crawling out into the plain, by God's mercy he espied a soldier who had fled from the massacre of the day before, and who carried him on his horse to the Spaniards at a very great distance, where he was completely healed. What, let me ask, was the occasion of so many deaths, and of so tragic an event? The unseasonable haste of a few soldiers in discharging their guns. The empty noise struck the air alone, and gave such courage to the Indians, that, laying aside fear, they rushed on more boldly, and denied the Spaniards the necessary time for loading their guns afresh. It was said, moreover, that many were destitute of gunpowder, and all certainly were so of courage, panic-struck at the sudden arrival of the savages, the burning of the houses, and the sight of so many deaths. The assaults of the savages must be repelled promptly but providently. Arms must be immediately resorted to, but something must always be reserved for the sudden chances of war: as the Indians, intent upon every opportunity of committing mischief, easily overcome the unarmed or those that

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manage arms unskilfully. Thus, if thirty artillery soldiers should undertake the defence of a station, they ought to be divided into three ranks, so that ten might fire their guns upon the enemy, ten load, and the others reserve an equal number loaded. By which means they would always have time to load their guns, and the Indians would never want cause for fear. By the careful observance of this method, thirty artillery soldiers might be found sufficient to rout and put to flight three hundred Americans. But if three hundred artillery-men were to fire all their guns at once, without killing any of the enemy, they, on the other hand, might be overcome by thirty savages. For the Abipones, like most of the Americans, are intimidated by the most trifling slaughter of their companions: if but one or two of them fall, the rest instantly take to flight, esteeming life far above the honour of victory. How comes it then that they are so dreaded by other nations? I will explain this in the next chapter.

714 spiral lines; others only make two circles round
 302 the eyes; and others again blacken the whole
 531 of the face. This custom is common to many
 [171] other nations of Paraguay, especially the eque-
 strian ones.

534 The Abipones render themselves formidable
 726 to the eyes, as well as to the ears of their ene-
 mies; for they prelude every battle with trum-
 pets, flutes, horns, and clarions, differing in
 sound, materials, and form. The horn instru-
 ments bellow, the wooden ones clatter, and
 those of bone, which are made of the leg of some
 large bird or quadruped, emit a very shrill
 whistle, while those of reeds have a ridiculous
 creaking sound. Others again, consisting of
 the tail of the armadillo, to which a reed is pre-
 fixed, fill the whole air, to a great distance, with
 a horrible roaring. I want words to describe
 the construction and use of all the different
 trumpets. This is very certain, that the Abi-
 pones have more trumpeters than soldiers in
 their armies. These terrible-sounding instru-
 ments they accompany with a savage howl,
 made by striking their lips with their hands.
 726 When rushing to battle they cry aloud, *Laha-
 ràlk! Laharàlk!* Let us go, let us go; as the Gua-
 ranies say, *Yahà! Yahà!* and the Mocobios,
Zokolák! Zokolák! Whilst the Abipones are in
 battle, they carry their eyes to every side of the

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field, to aim, or avoid weapons, and with a hoarse and tremulous voice threateningly repeat *Hô-Hô-Hô*, by which they endeavour to provoke the enemy, and excite themselves to anger. In European camps also, trumpets, pipes, and drums are doubtless used to animate and govern the army, and to inspire fear into the enemy. But no one will deny that more victories have been gained by silence than by noise. Would that the Spaniards of Paraguay would bear this in mind! for they, like the savages, begin the attack with loud vociferations. Barreda, General of the St. Iagans, often complained to me that he could never induce his soldiers to refrain from shouting when they attacked the hordes of the savages, and to approach them in silence and by stealth, that being caught unawares, they might be prevented from taking either to flight or arms.

It is much to be lamented that the terrific appearance and horrid clamours of the savages are dreaded so greatly by the Spanish countrymen of Paraguay. We have often seen not only their ears and eyes struck, but their minds disturbed to such a degree, that losing all self-possession, they thought no longer of methods whereby to repel force by force, but eagerly watched for an opportunity of flight to provide for their lives, though not for their fame or

726

security: for the savages grow more daring the more they are feared and fled from. In the towns themselves how often has a trepidation arisen, when the inhabitants, frequently from mere report alone, understood that the Abipones, rendered terrible by their blackened faces and their whole accoutrement, were flying thither on swift horses, shouting to the deadly sound of trumpets, brandishing an enormous spear in their right hands, laden with bundles of arrows, breathing fire and slaughter, and with their ferocious eyes threatening an hundred deaths, captivity, and wounds. You might have seen crowds pacing up and down, and lamenting approaching death, before they had even from a distance beheld the enemy from whom they were to receive it. Not only the unwarlike sex, but men distinguished with military titles, flew to the stone churches, and to the most hidden retreats; while, had they dared to show their faces, and present a gun to the enemy, the savages would easily have been put to flight, and their panic terror would have ended in laughter. Not many years ago it was reported one Sunday afternoon in the city of Buenos Ayres, that a numerous company of Southern savages had rushed into some street of the city. The fear excited by this false rumour so occupied the minds of all, that they ran up and down

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the streets almost distracted, uttering the most 726 ●
 mournful cries. In hurrying to a place of
 more security, one lost his wig, another his
 hat or cloak, from the violence of his haste.
 Meantime the garrison troops, who had been
 sent to search the whole city, announced that
 not a shadow or vestige of the enemy was to
 be found; tidings which restored serenity to the
 disturbed minds of the inhabitants, and filled
 them with shame for their foolish alarm. Scenes
 of this kind were extremely frequent in the
 cities of Sta. Fè, Cordoba, Asumpcion, Salta,
 &c, whilst the savages were overrunning the
 province with impunity. A ridiculous event
 that took place in the city of Corrientes is pe-
 culiarly worthy of relation. About evening a
 report was spread that a troop of Abipones had
 burst into one of the streets, and was employed
 in slaughtering the inhabitants. Upon this
 news numbers crowded to the church, which
 was furnished with strong stone walls. The
 head captain himself, an old man, mingled with
 the crowd of lamenting females, and gavo him-
 self up to groans and prayers. "Here, here,"
 said he, "in the house of the Lord, and in the
 presence of Jesus Christ, must we die." Indig-
 nant at words so unbecoming a soldier, the secu-
 lar priest, a brave man in the prime of his years,
 exclaimed as he arrived, "I swear by Christ

726 that we shall not die. The enemies must be sought and slain." So saying he leapt upon a horse, and armed with a gun hastened to succour that part of the city where the enemies were said to be raging. But lo and behold! when he arrives there, he finds the inhabitants all sound asleep, not even dreaming of the Abipones! Such was the terror excited in the Paraguayrians, not merely by the figures and presence of the Abipones, but by the very report of them.

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726 Two things which long experience has taught me, I greatly wish impressed on the minds of all. The first is, that the Indians are never less to be dreaded than when they present themselves most terrible, and with the greatest noise. For all that frightful preparation only betrays the fears of the savages. Distrusting their courage, strength, and arms, they think that paint of various colours, feathers, shouting, trumpets, and other instruments of terror, will forward their success. But any one with a very moderate share of courage, and stock of armour, will despise all this as unworthy of fear. This is my first maxim. My second is, that the Indians are never more to be feared than when they seem most afraid. They sometimes lurk concealed, uttering no sound, and giving no intimation of their presence; but this silence is

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as sure a prognostic of an attack, as a calm is, in the ocean, of an impending storm. They arrive on a sudden, and surprize the self-secure. They imitate death, whose ministers they are, by coming when least expected. In the heat of battle, the Abipones often take to flight, in the design of enticing the Spaniards to pursue them, that they may slay them, when they are separated and their ranks disturbed, though unable to do so as long as they are in order. Hence it not unfrequently happens, that they who thought themselves the victors are vanquished by the fugitives. They fly to marshes, woods, winding-ways, defiles of mountains, rocks, or bushes, which places the excellence of their steeds, and their skill in riding and swimming enable them quickly to cross; while the pursuing Spaniards, incumbered by their clothes and baggage, and often destitute of proper horses, are easily pierced with spears whilst separated from one another, and struggling with the water, the mud, and the other difficulties of the way. Not to mention other artifices, after committing slaughters, plundering houses, and killing the inhabitants, the Abipones feign departure, and seem to be hastening their flight; but when they are supposed many leagues distant, renew the assault, surprize the surviving Spaniards, and kill all they can. So that it is a certain fact,

● 726 that the Indians are never more formidable than when they seem most afraid.

903 A very small number of Abipones are to be
726 feared by the Spaniards, however numerous, if they be reduced to straits, surrounded on every side, and left no way of escape; for then they dare the utmost in their own defence. They convert every thing they lay their hands on into weapons. Terror inspires them with sagacity and courage, and consequently is more to be dreaded than the most magnanimous spirit. I have many instances of this in my mind, but it will be sufficient to relate three. An Abipon, with arrows, and, when these were consumed, with sticks, supplied him by his wife, did so much execution against the soldiers of St. Iago, by whom he was surrounded, that he maintained his post, and when, after many wounds inflicted and received, he fell at length, was highly extolled for his valour by the very Spaniards against whom he had fought, Nachiralin, Chief of the Yaaucaniga Abipones, spread the terror of his name throughout the colonies of Paraguay. Accompanied by a crowd of his followers, called *Los Sarcos*, or more properly *Garzos*, from their grey or blue eyes, Nachiralin afflicted the country of Cordoba, Sta. Fe, Corrientes, and Paraguay, for many years, with slaughter and pillage, till he was at length taken

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and slain at the shores of the Tebiguary, by two hundred soldiers from Asumpcion. Shut up and besieged in a wood with fourteen Abipones, he fought with such obstinacy against the company of Spaniards, that he did not fall till after a contest of several hours. Some of his fellow-soldiers could not be prevented from escaping. It was never without disgust that I heard this victory boasted of by those present at the engagement; you would have thought they were speaking of the bloody battles of Thrasymane, Caudinæ Furculæ, Blenheim, &c. Certainly the leader Fulgentio de Yegros obtained great celebrity at that expedition, and was afterwards raised to the highest honours in the army, and to the government of the province itself. Add to these instances, that twenty wood-Abipones when attacked in the open plain by three hundred Christian Mocobios and Abiponian catechumens, chose to lose their lives before they would quit their station. Incredible is the obstinacy with which these few contended against numbers. The place which they had chosen at the beginning of the fight they every one occupied in death. From this it is evident, that a few, though inferior in number, arms, and strength, may prove formidable to a multitude, if, besieged by a surrounding company, and confined by the narrowness of the place, they

703 have no room left them for escape. Scipio
726 judged wisely that a flying enemy should be al-
lowed a passage. This precept is generally
obeyed by the Paraguayrian Spaniards, who
often yielded the savages more liberty of escape
than need required. This Barreda found in an
hundred expeditions which he headed against
726 the Abipones and Mocobios. These savages
display much prudence in the choice of the si-
tuation of their hordes. They generally choose
a place which has a wood close behind, a
lake, river, or marsh in front, and pasture for
their horses on both sides. Barreda told me
that whenever hordes so situated were to be at-
tacked, he ordered his men to besiege them on
the part towards the wood, that the savages
might not, as usual, find their security there;
but that the soldiers never obeyed his orders,
well knowing that if they deprived the enemy
of an opportunity of escape they should have a
most dangerous conflict, and a very doubtful
victory.

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times even, whenever some hundreds of soldiers fiercely approached the stations of the savages, either the steel was rusty and would not explode, or the gunpowder so moist as to prevent its blazing, so that very few were able to discharge their guns. I could fill pages with facts of this kind, but will only relate two of the more recent ones. A handful of Abipones were overrunning the territory of St. Iago. Thirty soldiers were sent to observe their motions, but being suddenly attacked by the savages, who had lain in wait for them, were every one miserably slain. They had passed the night in the open air, and as the guns were very badly taken care of, the copious dew so moistened the gunpowder, that Vesuvius itself would not have been able to kindle it. This slaughter was effected by twenty Abiponian youths. Two hundred soldiers, headed by Fulgentio de Yegros, attacked the hordes of the Tobas. I was astonished to hear the captains, on their return from this expedition, lamenting that at the very moment of the savages' assault, they had found their muskets unmanageable, and quite useless, either from rust or wet. They had spent greatest part of the night in a field, amongst trees dropping with plenteous dew, that at day-break they might steal unobserved to the enemy's station.

It is well known to us, and can be surprizing

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CHAPTER XLI.

CONCERNING THE ARMS OF THE ABIPONES, AND THEIR
BATTLE-ARRAY IN FIGHTING WITH OTHER SAVAGES.

DIFFERENT enemies must be combated with 411
different arms. The Abipones, when they go 726
out against the Spaniards, lay aside their breast-
plates of antas' skins, and their bows, and place
their chief dependence in a swift horse and a
strong lance; but when attacked at home by a
foreign foe, whoever it may be, they make suc-
cessful use of the bow, for, from the constant
exercise of war and hunting, they acquire so
much skill in the use of that weapon that they
take a more certain aim with it than the Spa-
niards do with a gun.

Let us suppose that a rumour is spread 726
throughout the hordes of the Abipones that the
savages are speedily coming to attack them.
If they have strength and courage sufficient to
repel the enemy, trusty scouts are sent out in
every direction to learn their route. The rest, 273
meantime, make it their chief care to prepare a 726
drink of honey, or the alfaroba, for a public
drinking-party. For the Abipones think that
they are never more acute in counsel, or braver

²⁷³in fight, than when they are drunk. Famiano
⁷²⁶Strada, in his history of the Belgic war, writes
thus of Schenck, a celebrated general of the
Belgians: "He never handled arms better than
when he had drank profusely, and was intoxi-
cated with wine." I have often found the same
to be the case with the Abipones as with
Schenck. In the colony of St. Ferdinand we
learnt that a hostile troop of Mocobios and
Tobas were advancing toward us by hasty
marches, and were only two days' journey dis-
tant. The Abipones, astonished, not alarmed
at this news, though very few, awaited the as-
sault of numbers amidst drinking and songs of
triumph. They spent two days with their
horses shut up in stalls within the town, that
they might be always in readiness, with their
faces painted to excite terror, holding a cup
in one hand, and a quiver in the other. Quin-
quagesima Sunday came. At three o'clock in
the afternoon the troop of savage horse ap-
peared in sight. The Abipones, though after
such long drinking hardly in possession of their
senses, or able to stand upon their legs, snatched
up their spears, leaped upon their horses, which
were made ready by the women, and, scattered
in a disorderly manner up and down the plain,
rushed full speed upon their enemies, amid the
discordant bray of trumpets, with such good

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fortune, that, abandoning their project of ²⁷³ plundering the colony, they sought security ⁷²⁶ in the adjacent woods. But being prevented from this by the Abipones, they rushed off on all sides. The enemies hurried away at full gallop; the Abipones endeavoured to overtake them. It was not a fight, but a race between the fugitives and their pursuers. The contest consisted more in the swiftness of their steeds than in weapons, which were sent backwards and forwards, but, because badly aimed, without injuring very many. Our victors returned to the colony when the night was far advanced, some not till the morning, all safe and sound, (except one, whose head was bruised with a club,) and, what was very surprizing, quite sober, having exhaled the effects of the liquor, not with sleeping, but with riding and fighting. How many of the enemies were killed and wounded I do not know: but that more than two hundred were put to flight by seventy drunken men was a noble victory for us. Let us now treat of the other preparations which the Abipones make previous to a fight.

Every thing being in readiness for the drink- ⁷²² ing-party, which is held before a battle, their chief anxiety is to conceal their droves of horses from the eyes and hands of the enemy. Reserving the best within the neighbouring

722 stalls, that they may be ready for the uses of war, they place the remainder in stations; access to which is rendered difficult to the enemy either by the high bank of a river, the intervention of a wood, or their ignorance of the way. They also look out for places of concealment for their wives and children, and all that are unable to defend themselves. The Spaniards told me they had often seen whole Indian families plunged up to the neck in lakes and rivers. ✓ As

726 soon as ever a report is spread amongst the Abipones of the approach of an enemy, they immediately stain their faces, and carry about bundles of weapons, and a military trumpet, which they blow chiefly in the dead of the night, that the enemies may know from their scouts that they have shaken off all fear, and are vigilant and desirous of the conflict. When 723 certified of the approach of the enemy's forces, they provide for their safety in various ways.

726 If they are few in comparison with their adversaries, they make up for the want of strength by craft. That they may not be obliged to join in open battle, they use various artifices to prevent the enemy from gaining access to their stations. They set out on the road, and surprize them by an ambuscade; or make themselves appear more numerous by redoubled tumult of military trumpets, or leaving a num-

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ber of drummers and trumpeters at a distance⁷²⁶
 behind, pretend that they are only the part of⁷²³
 a company that is to come after; or putting
 Spanish dresses on some of their men, make
 it appear as if they had Spanish soldiers at
 hand to give them aid. Misled by these arti-
 fices, the enemies not unfrequently give up
 their intention of fighting, and make the best
 of their way back again. Often, however, no⁷²⁶
 opportunity is left them for stratagems. Com-
 pelled by a sudden inroad of the enemy, or al-
 lured by confidence of victory to resolve upon
 a combat, a piece of ground opposite the ap-
 proaching enemy, and near the horde, is se-
 lected for the purpose, that they may be near
 their wives and children should they be in
 danger. Heralds are sometimes sent forward
 by the enemy to explain the causes of the war,
 and challenge the inhabitants to fight. But
 the bellowing of drums and trumpets, and hor-
 rid vociferations, are generally the only answer
 they obtain. Every thing preceding and ac-
 companying a battle, is a spectacle worthy to
 be seen, and laughed at by Europeans. About⁷²⁶
 the beginning of the conflict you may see jug-⁷⁹¹
 glers mounted on horseback, who, making ri-
 diculous gestures, and whirling round palm-
 boughs in their hands, utter the direst impreca-
 tions on the hostile army: whilst old female

- 726 jugglers are observed crawling on the ground, or
[79] leaping in the streets, and with sullen eyes and
a hoarse voice, uttering some omen or curse.
- C714 You may see the Abipones with their faces
stained, with many-coloured feathers in their
heads, and arms in their hands, some wearing
breastplates, others entirely naked, enter the
field with a marching gait, and appearing to
threaten the whole world. You may see
mountains in labour bring forth ridiculous mice.
These heroes, when placed in order of battle,
[80] wish to be counted by the Father, as they can-
not count themselves. As I walked up and down
the ranks, I was frequently asked, "Are we
many?" to which I constantly replied, "You
are very many;" lest they should be disheart-
ened at their want of numbers. Experience
taught me that the towns were mostly attacked
by a numerous enemy when very few of
the inhabitants were left at home—the rest
being dispersed far and wide for the sake of
hunting. The sagacious savages make the
assault when they have learnt from their spies
that the colony is bare of defenders. They
form themselves into a square, if the place will
admit of it. I observed that they sometimes
placed the archers in the midst, and the spear-
men on each wing; at others, the archers and
spearmen ranged themselves promiscuously.

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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The Mocobios, Tobas, and Guayourús leave ⁷²⁶ ●
 their horses a little way off, in sight, and join bat-
 tle on foot. The Cacique, or any other person ^[77]
 in authority, sits on horseback in the front of
 the army; but when the battle commences he
 dismounts and fights among the rest. The
 leaders of the Abipones are generally great ⁷⁰¹
 fighters, as their example has more weight than ⁷²⁶
 words amongst the soldiers, who follow their
 leader with greater willingness when he is
 bravely fighting, than when he is exhorting
 them from a distance.

At first they stand in close ranks, but after- ⁷²⁶
 wards, when the enemy is to be attacked or
 repelled, in such loose ones that each soldier
 has a space of four or six cubits on every side.
 In fighting they never stand erect, or quietly
 on their feet. They run up and down with
 their bodies bent to the ground, and their eyes
 fixed on their adversaries, for the sake either of
 avoiding or aiming a blow. With a threatening
 voice they provoke the enemy by continually
 exclaiming *hd, hd, hd*, raising their voices from
 the lowest to the very highest tones. They rub
 their right hand every now and then on the
 ground, lest the string of the bow should slip
 from their fingers when they are moistened
 with perspiration. The Indians do not imitate
 the Europeans, who send a shower of darts at

[Line. APPROXIMATELY 6-8 FEET. (1 CUBIT = ABOUT 18 INCHES)]
 --- ANALYST ---

726 the same moment at the enemy. Each takes aim at his adversary with his arrow, so that one diligently watches the eyes and motions of the other; and, when he perceives himself aimed at, changes his situation by leaping to the right or left. Many weapons are cast, though seldom with impunity, at the leader of the army, and the most distinguished warriors. When one is often aimed at by many, had he more eyes than Argus, and were he more agile than the wind, no one can dare to promise him security; so that if he leave the field of battle unhurt, it is often to be attributed to good fortune, seldom to dexterity, and still seldomer to his leathern breastplate, which I myself have seen yield not only to spears, but even to the stronger arrows.

If their own arrows fail them they will send back those shot by the enemy. However, when their quivers are exhausted, as sometimes happens, and their souls fired by the combat, after having fought for some time, at a distance with a bow, they will come to close fighting with a spear. Neither then, however, will the plain be inundated with human blood. The savages have, indeed, great power in dealing blows, but they have still greater swiftness in eluding them. The whole combat is often confined to threats and vociferations. Sometimes many are wound-

726 ed, but very few die in proportion to the number of wounds; for unless the head or breast
752

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be pierced they never despair of the man's life. 726
They are used to consider broken ribs and im- 752
mense gashes in the other members, as attended
with little danger; they calmly look upon them
without any expression of pain, and, half alive,
reluctantly suffer themselves to be borne from
the fight on other persons' arms. This I learnt, 703
that these savages, unless flight be denied 726
them, seldom dare the worst. Terrified at the
slaughter of a very few of their fellow-soldiers,
they desert their leader, and escape how they
can. There is no need to sound a retreat.
Should ten or twenty take to flight, the rest,
freed from all restraint of shame, trust their
lives to their horses, and rush along with the
impetuosity of a river that has burst its banks.
On urgent occasions you will see two or three
seated on one horse. At the beginning of
an engagement on foot, they take care that
the means of flight may not fail them: behind
the backs of the combatants, and out of reach
of the weapons, they station horses, upon which
young men sit, and safely watch the vicissi-
tudes of the fight.

But if the enemy, finding the fortune of war 726
against them, betake themselves to flight, they
scarce have to fear a very obstinate pursuit
from their adversaries, as the conquerors are
very cautious not to forfeit their glory; they

- 726 are unwilling, by a doubtful contest, to experience a change of fortune, and to undergo a new danger. A spear, or garment, taken from them in battle by their enemies, the Abipones consider a terrible disgrace to their nation, regarding the loss of it with as much grief as Europeans do that of their drums or standards. The Abipones never attribute victories, and the fortunate events of battles, to their own skill, but to the arts of their jugglers. Although they hold the other Paraguayrian nations in contempt, yet they allow the Guaycurùs to be formidable; they say that they are cut down like funguses by the spears of these savages, not because they excel them in goodness of arms, strength of body, or courage of mind, but because they enter the fight attended by far more skilful jugglers. The Cacique Alaykin affirmed to me, that persons blown upon by their breath fell to the ground, as if struck with thunder.
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186
- 727 But now let us contemplate the Abipones triumphing after a successful fight. If the event has answered to their wishes they fill the country with joyful rumours of victory, and generally exaggerated accounts of the slaughter of the enemy. They who have behaved with distinguished valour have the ears and eyes of all directed towards them. They who have re-